

**THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS' LITERACY SKILLS IN
GRE TSA UNIVERSITY THIKA SUB-COUNTY, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**


**DICKSON MUSEE
DANIEL MUMO
KENNEDY MUNENE
DOMINIC MATUKU**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES,
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELORS DEGREE IN EDUCATION
ARTS, GRE TSA UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER, 2025

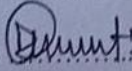
DECLARATION

This research is our original work and has been presented for a degree programme in the institution and has not been submitted in any other institution.

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Dickson Musee

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Signature  Date 16/10/2025

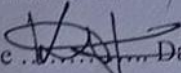
Daniel Mumo

EDU-G-4-1866-22

Signature  Date 16/10/2025

Kennedy Munene

EDU-G-4-1833-22

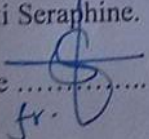
Signature  Date 16/10/2025

Dominic Matuku

EDU-G-4-2068-22

This project has been submitted to me as the supervisor.

Ms. Igoki Seraphine.

Signature  Date 16/10/2025

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to our dear parents as we are being thankful for strong academic foundation and inspiration which is based upon this achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would wish to sincerely thank God, our supervisor Ms. Igesi Seraphine and the school administration for providing us with space and resources that helped us in achieving success this far. Finally, Special thanks to those who directly or indirectly or indirectly contributed to the success of this project writing.

Table of Contents

DEDICATION.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	IV
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	2
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	2
1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	3
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.7 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	4
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	6
2.2 VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT.....	7
2.3 WRITING QUALITY.....	8
2.4 READING COMPREHENSION.....	8
2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
2.6 SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED GAPS.....	11
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	12
3.0 INTRODUCTION.....	12

3.2 TARGET POPULATION.....	12
3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE	12
3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	13
3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	13
3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	13
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES.....	14
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	14
3.9 SUMMARY.....	14
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND	
INTERPRETATION	16
4.0 INTRODUCTION	16
4.1 RESPONSE RATE.....	16
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS.....	16
4.2.1 Gender Distribution	16
4.3.2 Most Used Social Media Platforms	18
4.4 INFLUENCE ON VOCABULARY AND SPELLING	18
4.5 INFLUENCE ON WRITING QUALITY	19
4.6 INFLUENCE ON READING AND COMPREHENSION	19
4.7 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	20
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 21	
5.0 INTRODUCTION	21
5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	21

5.2 CONCLUSIONS	21
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	22
5.3.1 To Students.....	22
5.3.2 To Educators.....	22
5.3.3 To Parents	23
5.3.4 To Policy Makers.....	23
5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	23
REFERENCES	25
APPENDICES	27
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	27
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE (FOR SELECTED STUDENTS)	28
APPENDIX C: DATA TABLES.....	28
WORK PLAN AND BUDGET.....	30

ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of learners' lives, transforming communication and learning. This inquiry examines the influence of social media on literacy skills among learners at Gretsia campus, Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. Specifically, it investigates how platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok influence vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and reading comprehension. Using a descriptive inquiry design, information will be collected from a 10% sample of the campus's student population through questionnaires. Guided by theories such as Social Learning Theory and Media Richness Theory, the inquiry explored both positive and negative effects of social media use. Preliminary outcomes suggest that while social media fosters creativity and audience awareness, its informal language may hinder academic writing and comprehension. By analyzing these dynamics, the inquiry aims to provide valuable insights for educators, learners, policymakers, and researchers to strike a balance between leveraging social media benefits and mitigating its drawbacks. The inquiry's outcomes will contribute to academic discourse on digital literacy and propose strategies for enhancing literacy skills in the context of increasing social media engagement. Ethical considerations and reliability measures ensure the credibility of the outcomes, making this inquiry a meaningful addition to understanding the relationship between social media and literacy.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the scope of the inquiry, including the Background to the inquiry, Statement of the inquiry Problem, Purpose of the inquiry, Conceptual Framework, inquiry Questions, Objectives of the inquiry, Hypotheses of the inquiry, Significance of the inquiry, Delimitations of the inquiry, and Limitations of the inquiry. The inquiry will specifically examine the case of Gretsca campus in Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya, focusing on the influence of social media on their literacy skills.

1.1 Background to the Study

Social media refers to digital platforms and mobile applications that enable users to create, share, and interact with various forms of content—such as text, images, audio, and video—while communicating instantly with others across geographical boundaries. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat have become deeply embedded in the daily routines of campus learners globally, including those in Kenya. These platforms offer learners avenues for not only entertainment and social networking but also academic collaboration, such as sharing learning resources, participating in virtual inquiry groups, and accessing online tutorials (Johnson, Roberts, & Lee, 2020). While social media can promote digital learning and knowledge exchange, it also encourages informal communication styles that deviate from the conventions of academic writing. The frequent use of slang, emojis, abbreviations, and fragmented sentences has created concern among educators about the decline of formal literacy skills, particularly in higher education (Taylor, 2020). This concern becomes critical when learners begin incorporating these informal habits into assignments, exams, and scholarly communication. One of the key challenges posed by social media use is its influence on core literacy components such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and reading comprehension. inquiry indicates that constant engagement with informal language on platforms like TikTok and Twitter may lead to poor academic writing habits, including reduced vocabulary range, weakened sentence construction, and an overreliance on shorthand communication (Clark & Grubb, 2019). Additionally, platforms that prioritize quick consumption of visual or short-form content tend to promote habits such as skimming, which negatively shapes learners' ability to engage with longer, more complex academic texts (Carr, 2021). These reading behaviors, if

unaddressed, could undermine learners' critical thinking and analytical abilities—skills that are crucial for success in academic and professional settings. At Gretsca campus, like in many institutions, learners are expected to meet formal academic standards, yet their growing dependence on informal communication via social media may create a conflict between their digital habits and academic expectations. Thus, it becomes essential to examine how these platforms are influencing learners' literacy development within the specific context of this campus. Despite the outlined concerns, social media also offers potential benefits that cannot be overlooked. Some studies have highlighted the role of digital platforms in enhancing communication skills, creativity, and global awareness among learners. For instance, the need to write for diverse audiences on social media improves learners' audience awareness and ability to adapt tone and language for different contexts—skills that are transferable to academic writing (Hall, 2021). Additionally, exposure to varied vocabulary through trending topics and multicultural discourse has the potential to broaden learners' linguistic understanding (Ziegler, Moore, & Franklin, 2019). These contrasting influences underscore the need for balanced, evidence-based conclusions. As a result, this inquiry aimed to explore both the positive and negative effects of social media use on literacy skills—specifically vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing structure—among learners at Gretsca campus in Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. The outcomes were expected to provide valuable insights for learners, educators, and policymakers in promoting responsible digital engagement while safeguarding and enhancing academic literacy (Anderson & Paul, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The purpose of the study was to examine how social media affects students' literacy skills at Gretsca University, revealing both positive impacts on creativity and audience awareness, and negative effects on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension due to informal language use.

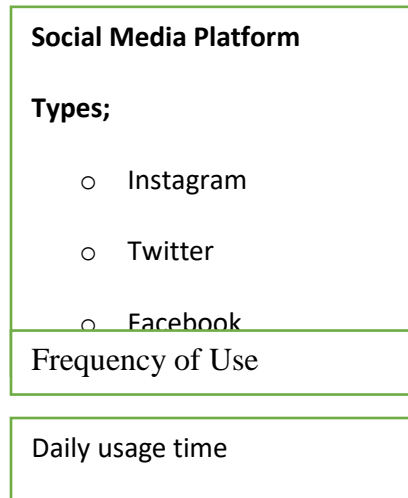
1.3 Purpose of the Study

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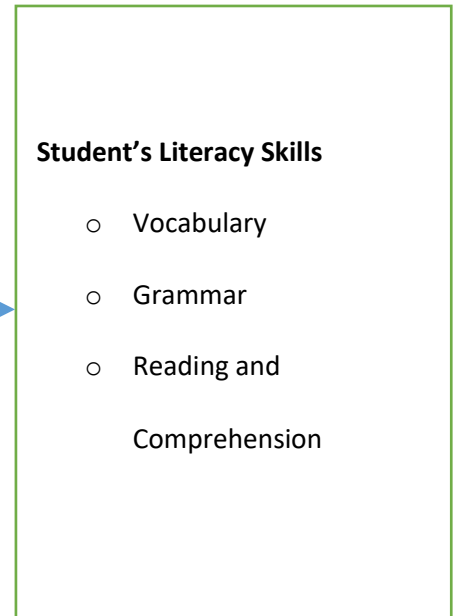
1.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this inquiry examines the relationship between social media usage and learners' literacy skills by identifying independent and dependent variables.

Independent Variables



Dependent Variable



1.5 Research Questions

1. How does social media influence students' vocabulary and spelling?
2. What impact does social media have on students' writing quality and structure?
3. Does social media use affect students' reading comprehension?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1.6.1 General Objective

To determine how social media affects the literacy skills of students in Grets University, Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the influence of social media on students' vocabulary and spelling.
2. To assess how social media impacts writing quality and structure among students.
3. To determine the effects of social media on students' reading comprehension.

1.7 Hypotheses of the Study

H1: Social media has no notable influence on learners' vocabulary and spelling.

H2: Social media does not influence the writing quality of learners.

H3: Social media use does not shape learners' reading comprehension.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this inquiry will benefit various stakeholders. learners will gain a deeper understanding of how social media influences their literacy skills, enabling them to make informed choices about its use. Educators will receive valuable insights into incorporating digital literacy into their teaching methods to address challenges and opportunities presented by social media. Parents should be informed about its influence on their children's literacy development. Policymakers can use the outcomes to guide education policy, while researchers find it a meaningful contribution to academic discourse on social media and literacy.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited to students enrolled at Greta University, located in Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. It specifically focused on assessing the impact of social media on students' literacy skills within this academic setting. The study did not extend to students from other universities or regions in Kenya or beyond. By narrowing the scope, the research aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the local context, although the findings may not be generalizable to other populations.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The inquiry encountered several limitations, including reliance on self-reported information, which may have introduced bias or inaccurate responses regarding learners' social media habits. Additionally, accurately measuring literacy skills quantitatively posed a challenge due to variations in individual academic backgrounds. To mitigate these limitations, we employed aim literacy assessments and cross-checked outcomes with questionnaire responses. Despite these efforts, the inquiry's outcomes should be interpreted with caution, as some variables were beyond the researchers' control

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on the influence of social media on literacy skills, focusing on vocabulary development, writing quality, and reading comprehension among learners. Social media has revolutionized how learners communicate and acquire information, with platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok becoming prominent among campus learners. While these platforms offer opportunities for collaboration, information sharing, and creative expression, they also present challenges to formal literacy development. The reviewed literature highlights both positive and negative influences, and the chapter concludes by discussing the theoretical frameworks that guide the inquiry—Social Learning Theory and Media Richness Theory—followed by the identification of gaps that justify the present inquiry.

2.1 Review of related literature

The relationship between social media and learners' literacy development has gained increasing attention as digital communication becomes a central part of daily life. Researchers have investigated how these platforms influence language acquisition, writing mechanics, and comprehension skills. According to Smith and Johnson (2019), learners participating in online discussions are exposed to diverse communication styles, allowing them to expand their vocabulary and sharpen communication adaptability. Ziegler, Moore, and Franklin (2019) also observed that learners' ability to write coherently improved when they regularly engaged with online audiences. Hall (2021) emphasized that social media nurtures audience awareness by prompting learners to consider tone, purpose, and context in digital messages. Despite these benefits, challenges remain. Brown (2020) noted that platforms like Twitter, with character limits, encourage brief and incomplete language structures that may hinder formal writing fluency. Similarly, Clark and Grubb (2019) found that consistent use of informal slang and shorthand led to weakened grammar and syntactic control. Taylor (2020) argued that emojis and casual phrasing often spill over into academic tasks, reducing the professionalism of student work. Anderson and Paul (2019) concluded that a guided balance between informal online discourse and structured academic writing must be encouraged to preserve learners' formal language proficiency while leveraging the communicative potential of digital platforms.

2.2 Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary is a foundational component of literacy, and its development is influenced by a learner's exposure to language-rich environments. Social media, being interactive and constantly evolving, introduces learners to a wide spectrum of vocabulary. Jones and Schieffelin (2020) suggested that platforms such as Twitter and Instagram expose users to regional dialects, cultural slang, internet-specific abbreviations, and trending phrases that reflect real-time conversations. Lee et al. (2021) found that the dynamic nature of digital platforms enhances users' familiarity with global events, concepts, and vocabulary through hashtags and interactive multimedia content. While this can expand lexical diversity, the influence is largely informal. Smith (2020) cautioned that prolonged exposure to casual language on social platforms can restrict learners' academic vocabulary. In academic settings, learners may struggle to shift between casual and scholarly language registers. Clark and Grubb (2019) supported this concern, observing that learners reliant on informal language tend to underperform in vocabulary-rich tasks requiring

technical or discipline-specific terminology. As a result, while social media has the potential to broaden lexical scope, especially in informal contexts, educators must develop pedagogical strategies that help learners critically engage with digital content, distinguish between formal and informal language, and apply vocabulary effectively in academic contexts. Encouraging code-switching and explicit vocabulary instruction may help bridge the gap between digital literacy and academic literacy.

2.3 Writing Quality

Writing quality encompasses multiple dimensions, including grammar, sentence construction, coherence, and tone. The rise of social media has influenced how students write, sometimes positively and at other times adversely. Anderson and Paul (2019) argued that platforms such as Snapchat and TikTok reinforce casual writing styles, encouraging the omission of punctuation and the use of fragmented sentences. This casual writing style, if not critically managed, can infiltrate students' academic work. Brown (2020) found that Twitter's character limitations promote fragmented, overly concise communication, leading to a reduction in syntactic complexity. These tendencies can become habitual, making it difficult for students to adapt to formal academic writing standards. On the other hand, Hall (2021) noted that digital platforms can enhance students' audience awareness by requiring them to tailor messages to diverse online communities. Ziegler, Moore, and Franklin (2019) also emphasized that informal digital writing fosters clarity and message coherence, especially when students engage actively with feedback. However, Taylor (2020) highlighted the spillover of emojis, memes, and abbreviations into academic assignments as a significant concern. These elements often compromise academic tone and clarity. Consequently, students must be guided to differentiate between communication styles suitable for digital platforms and those required for scholarly work. Incorporating digital literacy into writing instruction can help students transfer audience awareness and coherence into academic writing without compromising grammatical accuracy or tone.

2.4 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is integral to literacy and entails the ability to process, understand, and critically engage with written content. Social media's fast-paced nature and emphasis on visual content pose both opportunities and challenges for developing this skill. Carr (2021) observed that platforms like TikTok and Instagram promote skimming behavior, where users process brief

snippets of information instead of engaging with deep reading. Miller and Roberts (2020) found that such exposure may reduce students' attention spans and impede their ability to read longer texts with sustained focus. This can be detrimental in academic settings, where students are expected to comprehend and evaluate complex arguments. Smith and Johnson (2019) added that prolonged engagement with superficial content diminishes students' critical reading skills, making them less equipped to assess the credibility of sources and draw inferences. Despite these drawbacks, social media may support multimodal literacy. Johnson et al. (2020) argued that platforms such as YouTube, where text, audio, and visuals coexist, enhance students' ability to interpret and synthesize diverse forms of information. This integration can strengthen cognitive flexibility and comprehension in contexts where layered meanings are presented. However, for students to fully benefit from such exposure, educators must promote structured digital reading strategies and reinforce deep reading practices. These include teaching annotation, critical questioning, and summarization techniques that encourage students to move beyond passive scrolling and engage actively with texts, whether online or in academic materials.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two primary theories: Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory and Daft and Lengel's (1986) Media Richness Theory. Social Learning Theory posits that individuals acquire language habits and communication styles through observational learning, where behaviors modeled by others are internalized and replicated. In a social media environment, students are constantly exposed to influencers, peers, and online communities whose digital communication practices—ranging from slang and memes to emojis and abbreviations—shape the way students themselves write and speak. Bandura (1986) emphasized that repeated exposure to modeled behavior enhances the likelihood of its adoption. Therefore, students immersed in informal digital communication are likely to reflect those patterns in their academic writing unless explicitly taught otherwise. Media Richness Theory complements this perspective by evaluating how the structure and capabilities of communication platforms influence the depth of message content. According to Daft and Lengel (1986), media differ in their richness depending on their ability to convey nuanced, context-rich information. Rich media platforms like Instagram and TikTok rely on visuals and multimedia, offering immediate feedback and emotional cues but potentially limiting textual depth. In contrast, leaner platforms like Twitter are text-based but restrict message length, sometimes sacrificing detail and complexity. These differences impact how students consume and produce language across platforms. Together, these theories provide a useful framework for understanding how student literacy practices are shaped by both peer influence and platform structure, emphasizing the need for educational interventions that build critical awareness and promote intentional, context-sensitive communication.

2.6 Summary of Identified Gaps

While existing studies explore the general relationship between social media and literacy development, there is limited inquiry focusing on the specific subskills of literacy—such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension—in the African campus context. Much of the literature is based in Western countries, whose educational systems and cultural norms differ significantly from those in Kenya. As such, outcomes may not be fully applicable to local academic environments like Gretsca campus. What is more, existing studies often generalize social media effects without distinguishing between different platforms. The influence of text-heavy platforms like Twitter may differ significantly from image or video-based platforms like Instagram or TikTok in terms of their influence on language learning and comprehension. Few studies have explored how such differences shape specific academic tasks. Additionally, individual learner variables such as age, academic background, and frequency of digital use are seldom considered. This inquiry seeks to address these gaps by investigating how social media shapes literacy among learners at Gretsca campus. The inquiry will provide empirical insights into how various platforms influence vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, and reading comprehension within the Kenyan higher education context. These outcomes goal to guide educators and policymakers in developing targeted interventions, curriculum enhancements, and digital literacy programs that reflect learners’ real-world media interactions and academic needs (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used to explore the impact of social media on students' literacy skills. It outlines the procedures for data collection, sampling, analysis, and ethical considerations. The aim was to ensure that the research process remained rigorous and aligned with the study's objectives. Key components discussed include the research design, target population, sample size, data collection tools, and methods of analysis. This structured approach enabled the study to collect reliable data and draw meaningful insights about the influence of social media on vocabulary, writing, and comprehension skills.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' experiences and perceptions regarding the influence of social media on literacy. This design allowed for detailed descriptions and interpretations of student behaviors and attitudes without manipulating any variables. The focus was on understanding patterns and relationships between social media use and literacy development. The qualitative approach was appropriate because it facilitated the collection of rich, contextual data, capturing the complexity of literacy practices in a digital age. Through this method, the study aimed to uncover insights that may not be apparent in quantitative analysis.

3.2 Target Population

The target population for the study consisted of students enrolled at Gretsia University in Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. These students represented various academic departments and age groups, primarily ranging from 18 to 30 years. This population was selected because of its diversity and active engagement with social media platforms. Their different academic backgrounds and digital habits provided a comprehensive view of how social media influences literacy skills. The choice of this population allowed for more generalizable findings within the university context and contributed to the depth of the research data.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Simple random sampling was used to select participants, giving every student an equal chance of being included in the study. A sample of 70 students was drawn from the total population of approximately 700 students at Gretsia University, representing 10% of the student body. This percentage aligns with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who recommend a minimum of 10% for

descriptive studies. Random sampling helped ensure that the data collected was representative and free from selection bias. This sample size allowed the study to capture diverse perspectives on social media's effect on literacy.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The main data collection method was a structured questionnaire, supplemented by interviews and direct observation. The questionnaire included items on students' daily social media usage, preferred platforms, and perceptions of how these platforms affect their literacy. Interviews provided deeper insights into individual experiences, while observation helped validate self-reported data. Using multiple data collection methods enhanced the reliability and depth of the findings. The questionnaire was designed to be concise and easy to complete, encouraging high response rates while maintaining the relevance and clarity of the questions

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire were distributed online via Google Forms to facilitate easy and wide access. learners could complete the form using their smartphones or computers. The online format minimized logistical challenges and reduced costs. Participants were given two weeks to respond, during which reminders were sent to ensure sufficient participation. Before the full rollout, a pilot test was conducted with a small group to identify and correct ambiguous questions. These procedures ensured that the information collection process was smooth, efficient, and yielded valid responses reflective of learners' real experiences.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, the questionnaire underwent a pilot test with selected students to assess clarity and relevance. Feedback from the pilot helped refine the tool before full deployment. Consistency in question wording and structure ensured reliability across responses. The use of multiple data sources—questionnaires, interviews, and observation—further strengthened the study's credibility. Triangulation helped cross-verify the results, reducing the influence of bias and enhancing trustworthiness. These measures collectively ensured that the instruments accurately captured the intended data and produced consistent results across different participants.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

After data collection, we organized responses and analyzed using basic statistical techniques. We calculated frequencies and percentages to summarize participants' social media usage and its perceived effects on literacy. Thematic analysis was used for interview and observation data to identify recurring patterns and insights. This combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The approach provided both numerical evidence and contextual depth, revealing how social media use may correlate with changes in vocabulary, writing quality, and reading comprehension.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards to protect participants' rights and privacy. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided voluntary, informed consent. Confidentiality was maintained throughout, and data was anonymized to prevent identification. Students were assured that participation was optional and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence. Ethical approval was sought from the university administration before data collection. These steps ensured that the research was conducted with transparency, respect, and responsibility.

3.9 Summary

This chapter provided a detailed account of the inquiry methods used in the inquiry. It described the design, sampling procedures, information collection tools, and ethical safeguards employed to ensure the inquiry's credibility. A qualitative approach allowed the researcher to explore learners' perspectives deeply. The use of questionnaires, interviews, and observations ensured comprehensive information collection. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, and the examination methods provided both numerical and thematic insights. These methods positioned the inquiry to yield meaningful conclusions about how social media influences literacy among campus learners.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

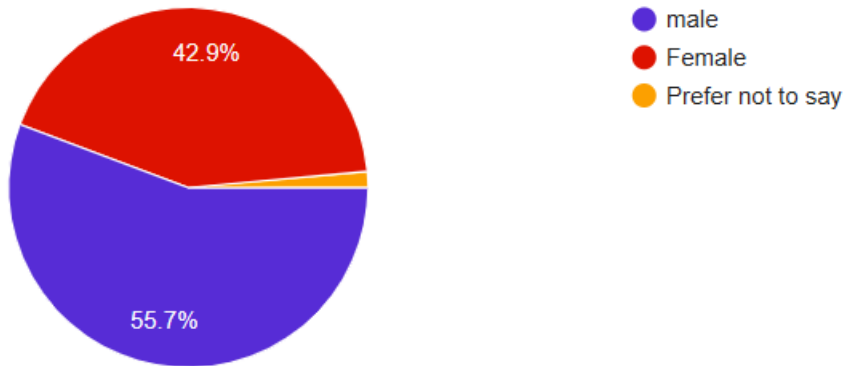
4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the information collected from the respondents and provides detailed examination and interpretation in relation to the inquiry objectives and questions. The information is presented using tables and percentages to clearly show the trends and patterns observed among Gretsca campus learners regarding the influence of social media on their literacy skills.

4.1 Response Rate

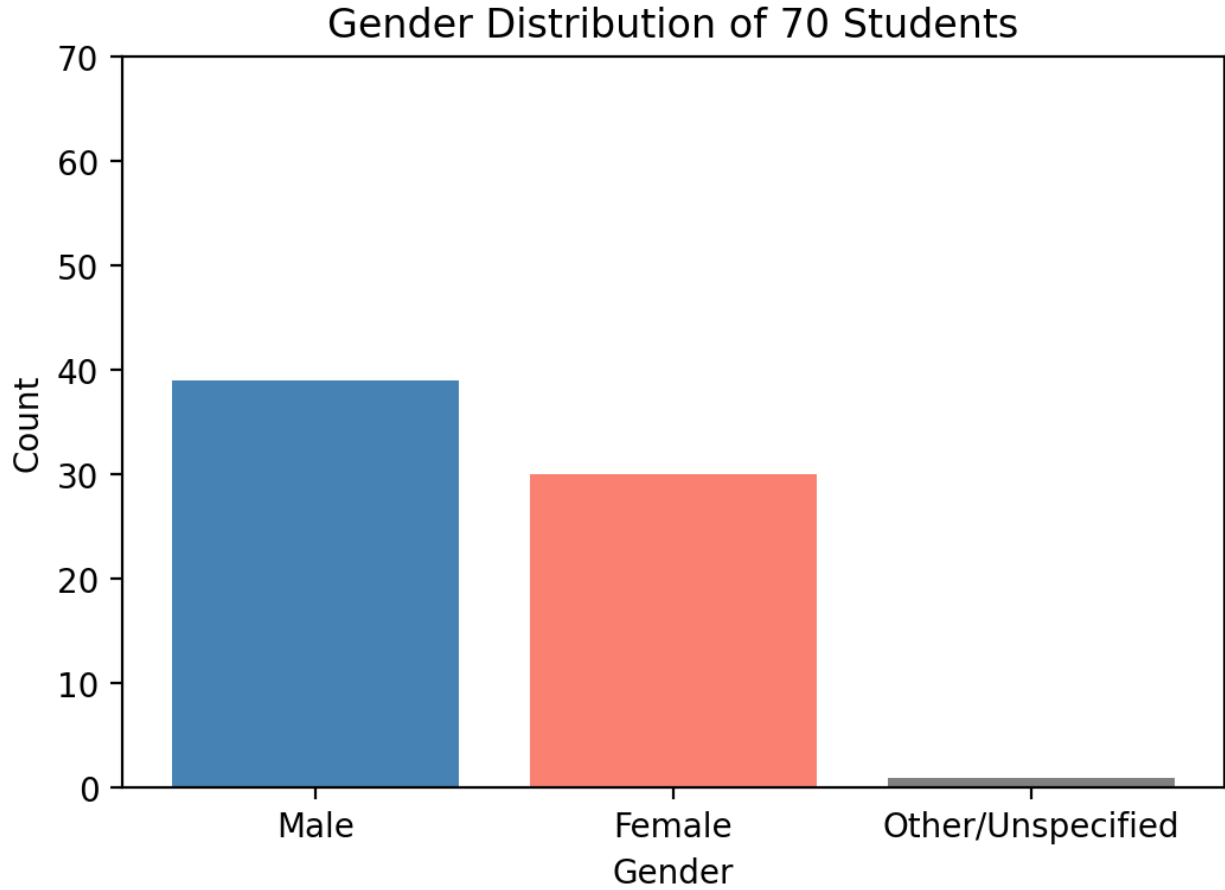
The inquiry targeted a sample size of 70 learners from Gretsca campus. Out of the 70 distributed questionnaires, all were correctly filled and returned. This represents a 100% response rate, which is considered sufficient for reliable examination and interpretation.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

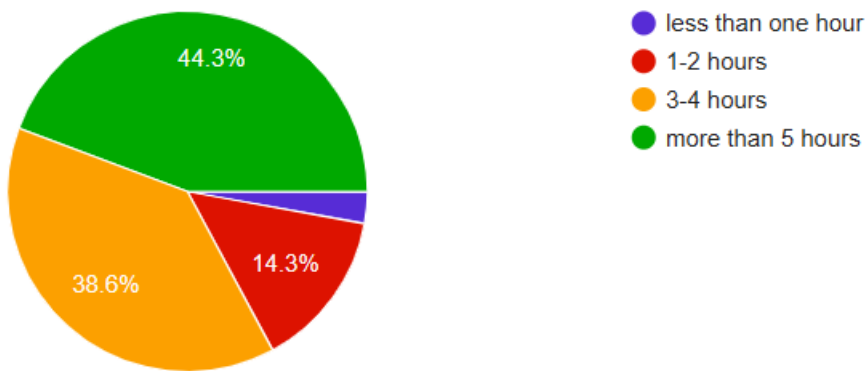


Considerably, more male students are actively participating in responding to matters affecting the student learning process as far as student literacy skills are concerned.

4.2.1 Gender Distribution

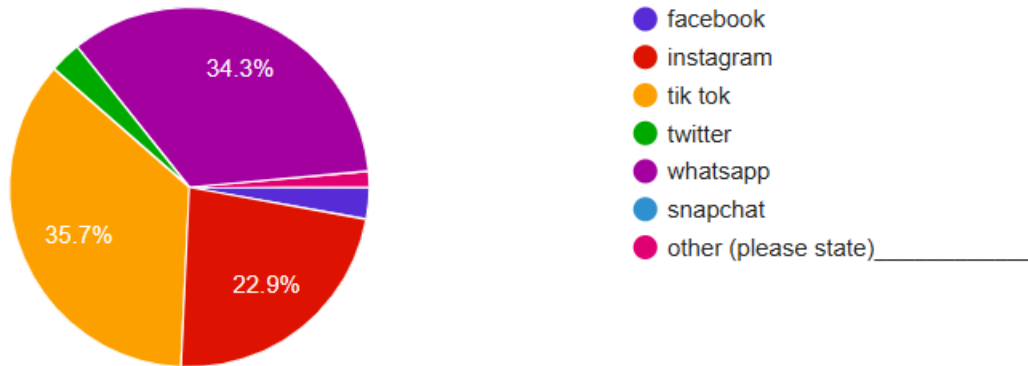


4.2.2 Hours spent in social media per day



A significant portion of the students (82.9%) spends more than three hours per day on social media. This indicates high exposure, which may have a considerable influence on their literacy skills.

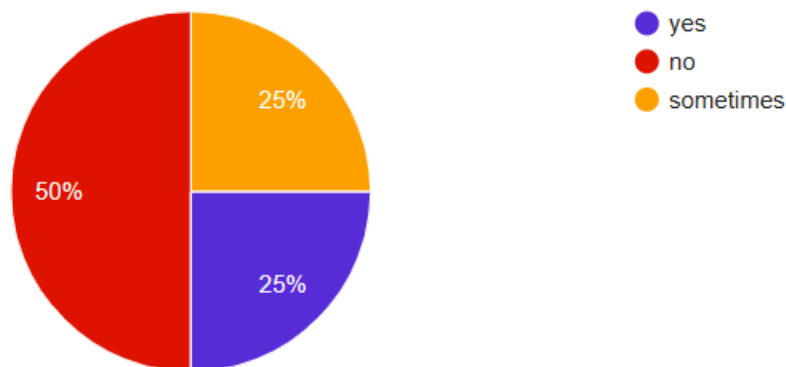
4.3.2 Most Used Social Media Platforms



TikTok is the most commonly used platform among the students, followed closely by WhatsApp and Instagram. This shows that students prefer platforms that allow visual and quick content sharing.

4.4 Influence on Vocabulary and Spelling

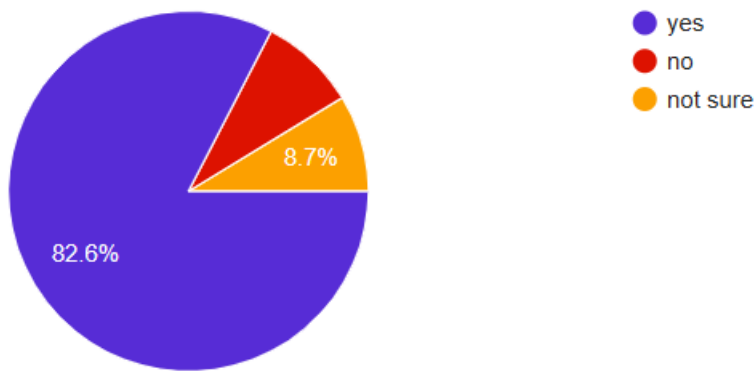
25% of students admitted that they frequently use abbreviations from social media in their school assignments. 25% reported that social media has introduced them to new informal words and slang that they sometimes mistakenly use in academic work. 50% reported that social media has not influenced their vocabulary and spellings.



The frequent use of informal language and abbreviations from social media is less effective to students' vocabulary choices in formal settings, potentially leading to poor academic writing habits.

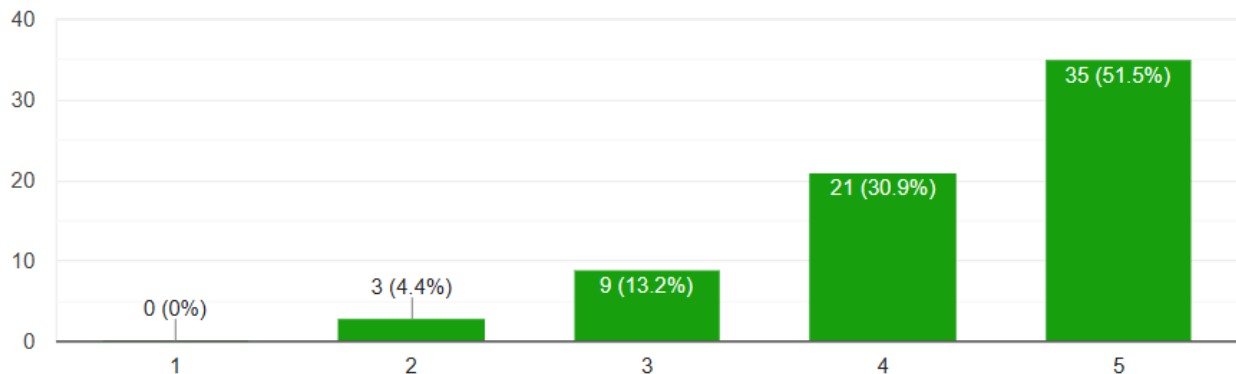
4.5 Influence on Writing Quality

82.6% of learners acknowledged using emojis and abbreviations when writing, 17.4% believed that social media helps them to write briefly and clearly due to character limits on platforms like Twitter. While social media seems to improve brevity and clarity, it also encourages the use of informal expressions, which may reduce the overall quality and professionalism of learners' academic writing.



While social media seems to improve brevity and clarity, it also encourages the use of informal expressions, which may reduce the overall quality and professionalism of students' academic writing.

4.6 Influence on Reading and Comprehension



51.5% of the students totaling 35 students, acknowledged that social media has not negatively impacted their reading and comprehension skills.

4.7 Summary of Key Findings

Positive Impacts:

Social media improves learners' ability to write concisely and tailor messages to specific audiences. Regular exposure to diverse online content introduces new vocabulary and various writing styles. This enhances creativity and linguistic flexibility, helping learners communicate effectively across different academic and social contexts while expanding their language proficiency.

Negative Impacts:

Excessive social media use encourages informal language, abbreviations, and slang, which often appear in academic writing. Additionally, constant skimming of posts reduces attention span and weakens reading comprehension. learners may struggle to engage deeply with complex texts, hindering their ability to analyze and construct well-organized, formal academic arguments.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key outcomes of the inquiry, presents detailed conclusions based on the analyzed information, and offers practical suggestions for learners, educators, parents, and policymakers. It also provides suggestions for areas where further inquiry is needed. The goal of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive overview of the inquiry outcomes and to guide future actions that can help manage the influence of social media on learners' literacy skills.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The primary aim of this inquiry was to examine the influence of social media on learners' literacy skills at Gretsas campus. The inquiry specifically focused on the influence of social media on vocabulary, writing quality, and reading comprehension. Information was collected using questionnaires distributed to a sample of 70 learners. The outcomes confirmed that social media has both positive and negative effects on learners' language practices.

Key observations from the inquiry include:

Frequent Use of Informal Language: A majority of the respondents frequently use informal language, slang, and abbreviations commonly found on social media platforms. This informal language use was reported to have influenced their academic writing, sometimes reducing the formality required in school assignments and examinations.

Skimming Habits: The inquiry found that many learners have developed the habit of skimming through reading materials, a behavior influenced by the rapid consumption of short posts on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This has negatively impacted their ability to engage in deep, critical reading of complex academic texts.

Improved Brief Writing Skills: Some learners noted that social media had improved their ability to write concisely. The character limitations on platforms like Twitter have trained them to communicate quickly and efficiently, which can be beneficial in specific contexts but may also reduce the depth and detail required in academic writing.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the outcomes of this inquiry, it can be concluded that social media plays a dual role in shaping learners' literacy skills. On one hand, social media enhances learners' communication efficiency and improves their ability to write concisely, which can be beneficial in some

academic and professional contexts. Even so, on the other hand, it compromises formal academic literacy by encouraging the frequent use of informal language, abbreviations, and slang in situations where formal communication is required. The overuse of social media abbreviations and informal vocabulary tends to spill over into learners' academic writing, leading to a weakening of grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and the formal tone that is expected in academic environments. Additionally, the inquiry found that many learners have developed a preference for skimming content rather than engaging in thorough reading. This habit of skimming, largely influenced by the fast-paced consumption of brief social media posts, reduces learners' comprehension abilities, especially when it comes to understanding academic articles, textbooks, and examination materials that require careful reading and deep examination. As a result, while social media offers communication advantages, its negative influence on formal writing and reading comprehension should not be overlooked.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 To Students

Learners should make a conscious effort to separate the informal language commonly used on social media from the formal writing required in academic settings. It is essential for learners to understand that slang, emojis, and abbreviations are inappropriate in school assignments, examinations, and formal communication. By maintaining this distinction, learners can preserve the quality and professionalism of their academic work. Additionally, learners should limit excessive use of social media and instead devote more time to reading books, academic journals, and other formal materials. Engaging regularly with academic texts will help learners strengthen their reading comprehension and enhance their writing proficiency, which are critical skills for academic success and future careers.

5.3.2 To Educators

Teachers have a crucial role in guiding learners to manage the influence of social media on their literacy skills. Educators should integrate digital literacy lessons into their teaching strategies, ensuring that learners are aware of the differences between social communication and academic communication. Such lessons will help learners become more mindful of their language choices in formal settings. What is more, educators should place a strong emphasis on formal writing

training to help counteract the informal tendencies that learners may have picked up from frequent social media use. Writing exercises, critical reading assignments, and classroom discussions should be designed to reinforce correct grammar, proper vocabulary, and analytical thinking. These practices will help learners rebuild and maintain strong academic writing skills.

5.3.3 To Parents

Parents also play a notable role in managing their children's social media habits and supporting their academic development. Parents should actively monitor their children's use of social media to ensure a healthy balance between online entertainment and academic responsibilities. It is important that parents provide guidance and encourage responsible use of social media platforms. In addition, parents should promote reading at home by offering their children access to books and educational resources that support formal language development and reading comprehension. Encouraging a reading culture at home will provide learners with continuous exposure to structured language and improve their academic literacy.

5.3.4 To Policy Makers

Educational authorities and school administrators should prioritize the development of policies that integrate digital literacy education into the national curriculum. These policies should prepare learners to navigate the digital world while maintaining high academic standards. By embedding digital literacy into formal education, learners can develop skills that allow them to effectively differentiate between casual social media communication and formal academic writing. Policymakers should also ensure that schools are equipped with sufficient resources to support digital literacy programs. This includes providing training opportunities for teachers, as well as ensuring that schools have the necessary materials and tools to facilitate effective digital literacy instruction. Such investments will contribute significantly to improving learners' literacy skills in the modern, digitally connected world.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies should examine the long-term effects of social media usage on literacy development across different educational levels to assess whether these impacts persist as learners progress in their academic journeys. Comparative studies should also be conducted in other universities and regions to assess whether the influence of social media on literacy is

consistent or varies based on geographical, cultural, or institutional differences. Such comparisons could reveal important patterns and provide insights that are relevant to diverse educational settings. Additionally, further inquiry should explore the specific effects of different types of social media content, such as videos, memes, and academic blogs, on various aspects of language development, including vocabulary growth, grammatical accuracy, and reading comprehension. Understanding how these content types individually or collectively contribute to learners' literacy skills would offer a more comprehensive view of the relationship between social media use and language proficiency, which can guide more effective educational strategies and policies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

- Male Female

2. Age:

- 18–22 23–26 27 and above

3. Year of study:

- 1st 2nd 3rd 4th

Section B: Social Media Usage

4. Which social media platforms do you use regularly? (Check all that apply)

- Facebook WhatsApp Instagram TikTok Twitter Others: _____

5. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media?

- Less than 1 hour 1–2 hours 3–4 hours More than 4 hours

6. What do you mainly use social media for?

- Entertainment Academic Purposes Communication News and Information

Section C: Literacy Impact

7. Has social media introduced you to new vocabulary?

- Yes No

8. Do you use social media abbreviations or slang in academic writing?

- Yes No

9. Do you believe social media has improved your writing clarity or brevity?

Yes No

10. Has social media affected your ability to focus during reading academic materials?

Yes No

Appendix B: Interview Guide (for selected students)

1. How do you feel social media has influenced your vocabulary and spelling?

2. Do you find it easier or harder to construct formal sentences in academic tasks due to your exposure to social media?

3. Can you describe any habits you've developed in reading or writing due to social media use?

4. What social media platforms do you think influence your literacy skills the most, and why?

Appendix C: Data Tables

Table 1: Most Used Social Media Platforms by Respondents

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
TikTok	25	35.7%
WhatsApp	22	31.4%
Instagram	15	21.4%
Twitter	5	7.1%
Facebook	3	4.3%

Table 2: Influence on Writing Quality

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Use of emojis/abbreviations in writing	58	82.6%
Belief that social media improves writing clarity	12	17.4%

Table 3: Influence on Reading and Comprehension

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Social media has negatively affected comprehension	35	48.5%
No negative effect on comprehension	35	51.5%

WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Activity No.	Activity	Description	Expected Output	Time Frame
1	Topic Identification and Approval	Selection and submission of topic to supervisor for approval.	Approved research topic.	Week 1
2	Proposal Development	Writing of Chapters One to Three (Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology).	Draft proposal completed.	Weeks 2–3
3	Proposal Presentation and Corrections	Presentation to panel, receiving feedback, and making revisions.	Approved proposal.	Week 4
4	Data Collection Tool Design	Development and validation of questionnaires/interview guides.	Validated tools.	Week 5
5	Pilot Testing	Testing tools on a small group to check reliability and clarity.	Refined data collection tools.	Week 6
6	Data Collection	Administering questionnaires to students at Gretsá University.	Completed data collection.	Weeks 7–8
7	Data Analysis	Coding, tabulation, and interpretation using descriptive methods.	Data analysis results.	Week 9
8	Report Writing	Writing Chapters Four and Five (Results,	Draft report completed.	Weeks 10

		Discussion, Conclusion).		
9	Review and Editing	Revising report based on supervisor's feedback.	Revising report based on supervisor's feedback.	Week 11
10	Printing and Binding	Printing and binding three copies for submission.	Bound copies.	Week 12
11	Final Submission	Submission of completed research project to the School of Education.	Approved final report.	Week 13

Item No.	Budget Item	Quantity/Description	Unit Cost (KES)	Total Cost (KES)
1	Proposal Typing and Editing	40 pages @ Ksh. 30 per page	30	1,200
2	Printing and Photocopying	100 pages @ Ksh. 10 per page	10	1,000
3	Binding	3 copies @ Ksh. 200 each	200	600
4	Questionnaire Printing	70 questionnaires @ Ksh. 10 each	10	700
5	Internet and Communication	Data bundles, emails, calls	—	1,000
6	Travel and Logistics	Local transport for data collection	—	2,000
7	Stationery	Pens, notebooks, files, envelopes	—	800
8	Miscellaneous (10%)	Contingency for unexpected expenses	—	830
9	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST			Ksh. 9,130